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AN

ADDRESS ON COLPORTAGE,

BEFORE THE

American Tract Society,

AT THEIR

FORTY-FIRST ANNIVERSARY IN BOSTON,

May 30, 1855.

BY

PROFESSOR HITCHCOCK,

OF BOWDOIN COLLEGE.

BOSTON:

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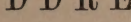

This Society concedes, what the friends of Foreign Missions emphasize and carry emblazoned on their banner, that our field is the world, the whole world, with all its continents and races. While it is for us to emphasize and emblazon on our banner what they in their turn will concede, that our earliest and most urgent duties are at home. The order of the Apostolic Evangelism we accept as the order for all time: First, Judea; then Samaria, and after these the Gentiles.

A Christian philosopher of the mother country, not long since carried to his grave, has suggested, that perhaps the grandest service we could render the world at large, would be to take some single nation, such as England, or France, or Germany, and by the proper discipline, carry up its entire life to the highest attainable pitch of Christian dignity and worth; thus presenting our Religion incarnated in a most noble and puissant Nationality.

And if this be true of any nation of Europe, much more must it be true of such a nation as our own, planted upon such a continent, composed of such elements, and so manifestly charged with a providential meaning and errand.

Geology teaches that the continents of our globe were once under water, all of them; and that this continent of America was one of the first to be upheaved from its ocean bed, though the last to be used in history. As though it had been finished and laid away in reserve for some distant exigency. It is one of the marvels of Providence, that so vast a continent, stretching so nearly from pole to pole, should have lain so long concealed. Plainly it was not meant for those Indian tribes that were found in possession of it. They were not such lords of the forest as romance has delighted to picture them, but worn out Asiatics, who were here by sufferance, to fulfil a temporary purpose, and then to pass away. Not by an eastward, but by a westward migration; not by Asia, but by Europe, was this continent to be taken and made a theatre for new experiments in history, to be accomplished by a new mixing of the human races. We have heard much lately about "Native Americans." A species not known, as I think, to science; certainly not known to revela-

tion. No continent has ever had any natives, except Asia; and these have run down to a very low point upon the scale. God has kept Civilization alive by keeping it upon the march, and has kept up the vigor of the human stock by perpetual intermixtures. The strongest races in the world have been always the mixed races; as, for example, the ancient Romans and the modern English. Latin, Sabine and Etruscan, made the Roman. Celt, Dane, Saxon, Norman, have made the Briton.

And now after ages of marching and fighting, Civilization, pushing ever westward, has found its last field and is making its last stand; while the mixing of races for these final and ripest tasks of history is going on as never before. Here on a fresh continent, kept vacant for centuries, there is now planted in the Providence of God a new nation, gathered of many nations, more electric, more sinewy and more powerful, than the world has ever known. In forty-five years, a hundred millions of these new men will be treading the continent underneath their elastic and triumphant feet. Shall these millions be truly religious, or shall they be defiant of the Divine authority? Shall this republic be Corsair or Christian? Shall we be the buccaneers of the Caribbean and the

Pacific, or whiten the seas with a benign and missionary commerce? Shall our legislation be cruel, or merciful? Shall the giant be a brutal Polyphemus, provoking some avenging Ulysses to punch him blind, or a generous and mighty Providence amongst the nations of the earth? These are the great questions of our day, overtopping all other questions. We have a new and most vigorous race to evangelize; a new, vast Continent to subdue and save. As our banner goes streaming proudly from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from Arctic snows to Tropic heats, the standard of the Cross should go on after it, the Dove pursuing the Eagle, till Christ shall have the Continent, and find this impassioned and resolute American people his most conspicuous and most efficient champions.

This is our work; more gigantic than any single achievement of Christendom in all the past; and yet so put upon us by the Providence of God, that we dare not dream of shrinking from it. Our chief concern now is to know in what way we can get this work accomplished. By no single instrumentality, most certainly; neither by institutions alone, nor by men alone, nor by books alone. And yet the work presses upon us. There is no time to be wasted. Something must be done, and

that, too, right speedily, or else the battle goes against us, and the Continent is lost.

I. In this emergency, the Colporteur enterprise forces itself upon our attention, first of all, as an indispensable instrumentality. We disparage no other instrumentalities, of whatever name. Bibles must certainly be printed and put in circulation, ministers raised up and sent forth, Sabbath schools gathered, Churches organized and Colleges planted. These enterprises are of vital moment, and cannot be pushed on too strenuously. And yet, important as they are, over wide areas of our country Colportage goes before them by a physical necessity which is not to be resisted. Without this instrumentality, antecedent and auxiliary, the conditions of our case are such that the entire continent cannot by any possibility be evangelized.

Consider, first, the immense extent of the field; reaching from the Lakes, and above the Lakes, to the Rio Grande; from the Atlantic to the Pacific; through 23 degrees of latitude and 57 of longitude; with thirty-one States in our Confederacy, destined eventually to be increased by as many more. Texas, Oregon, New Mexico and California, our most recent acquisitions, have given us not far from fifty per cent. of additional territory;

so that we have already grown to be very nearly as large as all Europe. We have a sea coast on the Atlantic, the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific, of more than five thousand miles. From New Orleans to New York, is two-thirds as far as from Boston to Liverpool. From Eastport to Astoria, in Oregon, in an air line, is above three thousand miles. Compared with famous theatres of history, ancient or modern, such dimensions are astounding. Greece, it is curious to observe, was only about the size of the State of Maine. Palestine, about the size of New Hampshire. Switzerland is only a trifle larger than Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. While the whole kingdom of Great Britian, including England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland, is not quite equal in extent to the two States of Pennsylvania and Virginia.

And for all this vast territory we have a population of hardly more than twenty-five millions, counting both blacks and whites. The country, consequently, is but very thinly peopled. It is to this feature of our case—*the exceeding sparseness of our population*—that I wish now to call your most particular attention. Massachusetts, with a hundred and twenty-seven to the square mile, is the most densely peopled of all our States; and,

leaving Rhode Island out of the account, by much the most. Virginia, mother of States and Presidents, has but 23 to the square mile ; Pennsylvania and Ohio about 50 ; Wisconsin less than six ; Arkansas only 4 ; while the average for our whole territory is not quite 8. Belgium, on the contrary, has 388 to the square mile ; England, 332 ; Holland, 260 ; Spain, 78 ; and even Sweden and Norway, 16. Our case is altogether an anomalous one. Never before in all the history of the world has there been so powerful and imposing a nationality covering so broad a space. The strong nations, of which we read, were kept strong by their compactness. It is the amazement of such as visit Italy, to find how contracted were the boundaries of early Rome. The widely diffused Nationalities, with scarcely an exception, have always been weak. So that we have departed from the analogies of history, by being at once strong and scattered. By all precedents, we ought to be weak. And we should be weak, but for the majestic oceans on either side of us, with which the hand of the Almighty has walled us in. Were Europe, with all her ambitious and powerful states, her heaving masses, and her unsolved problems, no farther from us than Canada or Mexico, this anomaly of twenty-five millions of men spread

out over so vast a territory, powerful and prosperous, would shortly be terminated. We should go to pieces like a great loose raft dropping down the rapids of a swollen river. As it is, we float along securely, the breadth and fulness of the current which bears us onward, making amends for the flimsy fastenings which hold us together. And so it comes about, that a great law of Political Economy, which has never failed of enforcement on the other side of the Atlantic, gets reversed on this.

But reversed only in part. Reversed in regard to material and merely political interests; but by no means in regard to spiritual. So far as culture is concerned, mental, moral and religious, this wide scattering of our population weakens us. The institutions, ordinances and opportunities essential to our completest development, require a certain density of population, below which it is perilous to fall. Society, and not solitude, is the normal and wholesome condition of man. It is not good for him to be alone. Isolation, whether of individuals or of communities, tends always to coarseness and barbarism. Precisely what degree of compactness, precisely what closeness of neighborhood, is safest and best, in order to the soundest and securest civilization, it might not be easy to

determine. Prussia, whose educational appointments, and whose internal economy in many respects, have been the admiration of Europe and America, reckons 160 inhabitants to the square mile; England, over 300. While here, with us, the average, as we have seen, is less than 8. Of necessity, therefore, there are vast multitudes of our countrymen not reached by the quickening influence of schools and churches. Even here in New England, the evil is beginning to be severely felt. There are thousands of people in out of the way places, two, three, or five miles from any church or school-house, growing up to be virtually Pagans. Or if they learn to "read, write and cipher," they are not instructed in regard to the way of life. And this here in the moral garden of the Union, with a population, taking the six States together, of 40 to the square mile. At this very moment, within these 70,000 square miles, holding a population not much short of 3,000,000, with the best of English and Puritan blood in their veins, there are believed to be at least 800,000 souls entirely unreached by the ordinary means of grace. A large proportion of these, doubtless, are within the sound of the Sabbath bell, and might hear preaching if they would;

but very many are so widely dispersed, that it is next to impossible to bring them together.

In the large Central and Southern States of the Union, even such as have been longest settled, this religious destitution is greater still. But greatest of all in the newer States of the West and Southwest; some of which have come knocking for admission into the Confederacy almost before we had learned their names. We speak of the "tide" of emigration which rolls on at the rate of seventeen miles a year, to occupy these States. But this tide is not of the gentler sort. It does not move with a smooth, well-defined and sweeping front. It carries a crest of foam, and dashes a spray on before it which spatters the wilderness. Once it was otherwise. Society moved slowly, taking along its institutions and its treasures with it. But the introduction of steam upon our western roads, rivers and lakes, has changed all this. The iron horse now races to the Mississippi. More than twenty thousand miles of water course have been thrown open to the rush of emigration, the impulse to which, on both sides of the Atlantic, amongst large masses of men, was never stronger than it has been of late. Thousands have poured themselves abroad over the virgin acres of the West, and have settled

down without any regard whatever to social, educational or religious advantages. Immense tracts have been appropriated; but the population is extremely thin. Could we look down upon the great West from a balloon floating through the sky, we should behold vast territories merely *dotted* with settlements; very many of these settlements being too small to support singly the institutions of learning and religion, and too far apart to combine together for this end. A few families, it may be, are clustered about the court-house, and this the only village in the county; the bulk of the population living scattered family by family, cabin by cabin. For example, there is a region of country lying between the Alleghanies and the Ohio river, embracing more than fifty counties, and containing a population of only about six to the square mile. Less than ten of the villages have a population exceeding 300 each. There are not a dozen points throughout all that region, for a thousand miles, where the gospel is preached statedly by any one denomination. In one county, larger than Rhode Island, the only ministers of the gospel are two illiterate circuit riders. And lest this be thought an extreme, or exceptional case, be it observed, that taking together the six States of Indiana, Illinois, Iowa,

Missouri, Michigan and Wisconsin, the average population is not above ten or twelve to the square mile. Families, as a common thing, dwell three, five and ten miles apart.

Such is the country to be subdued by us to Science, to Order and to Christ; and, what is peculiar to the case, subdued to Science without the School-house, to Order without Society, to Christ without the Church. A country now merely spotted over with settlements; but soon to be all smiling with harvests, and all astir with busy and prosperous life. And to have this country Christian then, in its maturity, we must Christianize it now. And to Christianize it now, we must employ the Colporteur. The time has not yet come for the School-house, the College and the Church. People are too far apart. The Ministry of the Word can plant itself only in the villages. The great bulk of the people must be visited house by house. Into every isolated cabin there must enter a man of prayer, to converse with the inmates of that cabin about their souls, and lead them, if possible, to Christ. And since this man of prayer has but an hour to give them, hurrying on to other cabins, and would not send them back to the darkness in which he found them, it only remains that he leave some godly and stirring

book behind him, to finish, if the Spirit helps, the work which is thus begun. Not the Bible only; but the voice of some preacher with it, such as Baxter from the battle fields of Cromwell, for a chaplain to every household, and Bunyan out of Bedford jail dreaming over again his Pilgrim Dream under every roof. To put a Bible and a preacher into every cabin: this is what we are bent on doing. This is what must be done, or calamities ensue which cannot be measured. And this work only the Colporteur, afoot, or on horseback, can possibly accomplish for us. For thousands of miles of territory, for thousands of scattered families, he is our only reliance. Six hundred and fifty-nine of these humble and self-denying laborers have been employed by this Society during the past year. Of the 639,000 families which they visited, and the 281,697 with which they conversed and prayed, 83,126 were habitually neglectful of the means of grace. So that we may reckon not far from half a million of souls reached by this instrumentality, who must otherwise not have been reached at all. A large number, do you say? God be praised, it is; but there remains a larger still, vastly larger, equally in need of help, and equally accessible.

II. Colportage commends itself to our adoption as a most economical instrumentality. Not that we would cheapen the means of grace, encouraging the world to drive a sharp bargain with the church. The question, in its legitimate range, is not a paltry one of merchandise, but an immeasurable one of life and death, outrunning all our counting-room calculations of profit and loss. It concerns the great future of our Republic; the greater future of immortal souls. Silver and gold, pearls and diamonds, are not to be thought of in the comparison. A rich man rolling in luxury, with no Bible in his lordly mansion, had better buy one by covering its pages with golden eagles, or by the mortgage of his whole estate. A man can afford to be a bankrupt or a beggar. Any man, who is truly a man, can afford it. But no man can afford to lose his soul.

So with society at large. It can afford to be poor and weak; can afford to let its material resources lie undeveloped; can afford to do without ships, railways, factories and fat harvests of the field; but cannot afford to do without the gospel. The institutions of religion are worth all they have ever cost, a thousand times over. That early atheistic civilization of Cain and his descendants brought no good, but evil rather, to the deluded

masses who were boasting of their arts and arms. After it was the Deluge. It is a suicidal economy for communities to be godless. Real estate, I think I have heard it said, was not worth much in Sodom the day that Lot started for the mountains. Everywhere it cometh true, that where no vision is, the people perish. Everywhere, we say; but nowhere truer than upon this fresh and sensitive Continent of North America, wrapped in so elastic an atmosphere, trodden by such elastic feet. The ordinances of the gospel and the means of grace must be provided for this land, whatever the cost may be. Even though our Colporteurs should cost as much, every man of them, as our metropolitan pastors, still we must have them. At $4,000 a year, many a Colporteur that we might name, would be cheap; the cheapest laborer we hire.

And yet as prudent, practical men, employing what revenues we can command, and bent on making the most of our capital, it is no meanness, but wisdom, to rejoice that so vast an advantage is offered us at so small a price. The Colporteur receives a salary of $150 a year. Adding to this his travelling expenses, often very light, the salaries of officers and the cost of agencies, and the whole average expense is only about $350 apiece. For $350 a year, we can have a man of sound

judgment and ardent piety, constantly in motion from hamlet to hamlet, from house to house, carrying Bibles, preaching Christ, and leaving books and tracts to be installed as stated preachers in the solitudes. Never, in all the history of the church, has there been so powerful an instrumentality, which could be worked so cheaply. Colportage is just the thing for us in our emergency, and it costs but little. The greater the shame, then, and the more stupendous our disgrace, if we fold our arms in indolence, and suffer the country to be lost.

III. Colportage has the seal of the Divine favor upon it as a most providential instrumentality.

Some good men, it is true, have had their misgivings in regard to the whole enterprise. The Colporteurs, for the most part, are uneducated men. Their path has not lain through Academies, Colleges and Seminaries. They are also unordained men, mere laymen; and being such, are set to do clerical work. And so there comes in a plea for learning, aided by a lively jealousy for the honor of the ministry and sacraments of the Church, to make it a question whether we do rightly and wisely thus to employ these plain men,

on whose heads no Presbyteries or Councils have laid their hands.

The most ardent friends of this enterprise, it can hardly need to be said, are behind no others in their regard for a carefully trained, judicious and learned ministry. They commend the zeal which urges the endowment of literary and theological institutions, and which seeks to increase in every way the number of candidates for the ministry.

But a new exigency has arisen in the history of the church, which loudly calls for new measures and methods of action. The inherent right of the Church of Christ in a great exigency to develope its energies in a new instrumentality, can hardly be questioned on any ground. History settles this point for us. In the beginning, the church, as Christ left it, had no ministry but the Apostolate, out of which four inferior orders were from time to time evolved, as the necessities of the case required. And so the church got its Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Deacons. Even Deaconesses were appointed; an order, which, in the Greek Church, did not become extinct till the thirteenth century. All these, in the Apostolic age, were set apart to their work by the laying on of hands. But as we are not bound absolutely by

what the Apostles did, so we are as little bound by what they did not do. As we are not required to have all their orders in the ministry, whether we need them or not, so are we at liberty to have a new order if it be needed. Hence our Colporteurs; a new instrumentality shaping itself to a new necessity and a new work. Ordained ministers we should be glad enough to employ; but they are not to be had in sufficient numbers for so vast a field. Where we send out a hundred from our seminaries yearly, five times that number would be required for immediate service. The thing is impracticable; certainly for the present, and for a long time to come. Even if we could start a sufficient number in a course of training for the ministry, crowding our Academies and Colleges with them, it would take ten years to get them into the field. Meanwhile, we should have lost half a generation of living and dying men; thousands having come up into active life, and other thousands having passed into eternity, without the gospel. The case is urgent. A necessity is laid upon us. We want seven hundred or a thousand men this moment to do Christian work and Christian battle for us at the West; and we cannot stop to educate and ordain them, but must send them as we can get them, praying the Great

Captain of our salvation to make good soldiers of them.

Thus far it has been wonderful to observe how God has helped this enterprise. At first, it was doubtful whether in a country so prosperous as ours, where the price of labor ranges so high, reliable men could be found to do such work for such wages. But Providence has raised them up. Very many of our Western Colporteurs, perhaps it may be said that a majority of them, are picked men, with something marked and special in their history. God has evidently trained them by a peculiar discipline for this peculiar service. And no sooner is the money ready, than there appears a man to use it. While, on the other hand, the appointment of men under straitened and forbidding circumstances, in obedience to an inward faith, and to what after earnest prayer seemed to be the leadings of Providence, has been followed in every instance, by greatly increased and unlooked for contributions of money. And so God has nursed and led along this great work; money bringing out the men, and men the money.

Of the spiritual fruits of the enterprise, the hundreds and thousands who have been converted to Christ, to be his diligent servants on earth, and to cast their crowns at his feet in Heaven, time

would fail me to speak. Up along those winding rivers, and amongst those heavily timbered mountains of the West, stand hundreds of isolated cabins vocal to-day with the worship of God, which, by the grace of God, and God's blessing upon the labors of Colporteurs, has taken the place of profaneness and riot.

Nor is this all. This noble Christian enterprise is reacting powerfully upon the older communities which have called it into being. The Colporteurs must now be reckoned amongst our most Apostolic witnesses for Christ and for Christian truth, in the midst of the present artificial, hackneyed and worldly generation. They are teaching us in their simplicity, the sublime secret of saving souls. They plant no massive batteries, behind whose grim walls soldiers may take their ease and cannon rust unused, no enemy appearing to draw their fire and wake their thunder; but like flying artillery, swift as lightning clouds and as terrible against the ranks of evil, they are scouring the prairies, leaving behind them in every charge the waving banner of the cross. From house to house, from heart to heart, the Divine message travels and triumphs. As these men are saving the West, so, if at all, and not otherwise, are we to save the East. If the Colporteur endures hard-

ness, so can we. If he conquers for his Sovereign man by man, so must we. In older communities, far advanced in comfort and culture, rich in the appliances of a riper society, there is imminent danger of forgetting this; of relying upon forms and systems. The Colporteur has learned to bring the gospel to one heart at a time. In this he revives the method of the Apostles and early Confessors of our faith; and we, to our surprise, find ourselves taking lessons of our humblest and rudest missionaries. The thing is of God, who knows so well how in any and every age to found schools and raise up teachers for his church.

Be it considered, however, that in sending these Colporteurs, we send also the distinguished men, whose writings they circulate; some of the first men in all the Christian ages. We send Richard Baxter; not that he may preach again to 1200 souls in Kidderminster, but to thousands upon thousands of our own dear countrymen. We send John Flavel; that he may pitch his tent upon our western borders, and open there afresh his Fountain of Life. We send John Owen; not so much that he may roll the heavy and gilded chariot of his learning across the prairies, and launch his ponderous javelin against the enemies of the Cross of Christ, but rather that he may sit

down in the meekness of his ripe experience, and explain to inquiring souls the secret of Forgiven Sin. We send John Bunyan; bailed out of prison, not that he may take one parish, but a thousand, and charm them towards heaven by the music of his wondrous Dream.

These, these are our real Colporteurs, or Pastors, rather, to stay and do the preaching, while the seeming Colporteurs move on. It is not for poor, unlettered men, it is for Bunyan and Flavel and Baxter, that we ask the salaries. Salaries we ask for these great, good men, whose bodies are at rest in peaceful cemeteries, side by side with the dust of our Fathers in the Fatherland, but whose minds and hearts are still at work for us, their emigrant children, sent of God to build up new institutions in this New World.

This object appeals strongly to our patriotism. For one, while I believe in universal philanthropy, and go for the higher law of conscience, supreme over all nations and races, I go also for my country. Not merely for what it has been, and is, amongst the nations of the earth, but for what, in the providence of God, it may be. Europe, for the want of just such institutions as these of ours, but still more for want of the solid character which underlies them, is in great commotion and distress.

Kossuth paces up and down in his humble lodgings in London, impatiently awaiting what has been promised as the final conflict between servitude and freedom. But what has Europe to hope for at the hands of her infidel democracy? She clamors for rights and immunities like these of ours, and chafes sorely under her feudal burdens, forgetting that this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting. It is for us to teach her, with growing emphasis, that it was the piety of our fathers which has made us what we are. Washington prayed in his humble tent. His soldiers sometimes surprised him in the thicket wrestling with God. His servant once overheard him in his closet, when his great agony for freedom could not be repressed. Many in his army were praying men. Congress prayed as well as voted. Ministers of the gospel prayed. Thousands of Christian men and women, in all the thirteen Colonies, laid hold upon the arm of God. And so we got through that war; greatly damaged by it in our morals, it is true, but still with enough of our earlier virtue left to enable us to recover from the dreadful shock, and keep on prospering till now.

Let us not be too boastful of the rank we take amongst the nations, arrogantly leading the

march of freedom. Our strength lies in our religion. Intelligence alone cannot keep us, nor material wealth, nor art, nor law, nor any wisdom or device of man; but only the fear of God dwelling in our hearts, and wrought out into our lives and laws.

The centre of our great power is fast travelling westward. And the moral heart of the nation is moving westward. The vital arteries are shooting across the prairies, over the mountains, and through the vallies. The heart of the nation, like the heart in our bodies, now beats upon the western side. Shall we keep it a Christian heart? Shall the arteries, which take our life to the distant extremities, be met by veins which shall bring back that life to the Christian centre from which it started? Our American freedom lies at stake on fields beneath the shadow of the Alleghanies. And if the star of hope, now shining in our sky, goes down, it drags on after it the night of many chaotic and dismal years.

But away with the thought of failure. Let no heart falter. Our destiny, we must and will believe, is not to perish, but to live; not to dwindle, but to grow; not to be a warning, but an example and a comfort to struggling nations. He who has brought us through the sea, and across the desert,

will not now suffer us to be destroyed amongst the mountains of Moab. He will take us over the Jordan. He will give us the promised Millennium. Only we must be careful not to despise, or mistake, the means. Let us send what ministers we can. Let us plant what colleges we can. But by all means let us send our Colporteurs, and send them by regiments. We need not the family of Aaron alone, to give us priests; but the whole tribe of Levi, to take up the Ark of God for us, and bear it to its place of rest.

Finally, this object appeals to our love for souls; which, after all, is the only reliable, the only constant and steady support of any system of beneficence.

It is not merely that the scattered thousands at the West and South are our countrymen; they are men, with undying spirits to be saved or lost. My Christian brother, do you see that isolated, distant cabin? A mere dot in the wilderness. But beneath its roof is a human family,—father, mother, children. They toil, they rejoice, they grieve, they sicken and they die. Some burdens and passions of the world they have indeed escaped; but yet there is sin upon them, and a judgment before them. Soon eternity will have devoured them all. One thing they need—the

Gospel; to soften their dying pillows and open to their fading vision the paradise of God. Say, shall they have this gospel? Yes, surely, if we ourselves have experienced the blessed power of it. But whom shall we send, and who will go for us? God be praised, here stands a man, here stand seven hundred men, any one of whom will be glad to go. He will go, carrying the Word of God in his hands, the love of God in his heart; and over the work he does, there shall be joy in heaven amongst the angels.

THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE.

"NOTWITHSTANDING the differences among the various denominations of Protestant Christians, it is pleasant to discern their real oneness in their love for institutions designed to explain, enforce and promulgate the essential doctrines of Christianity. Such an institution is the American Tract Society with its various branches. The estimation in which it is held by enlightened men of various names, is apparent from the subjoined declarations:—

"'It is a truly Christian institution, founded on principles and conducted in a spirit I peculiarly love.'—*Hon. William Jay, Protestant Episcopalian.*

"'There is no benevolent institution that can lie nearer my heart, than the American Tract Society.'—*Rev. J. G. Schmucker, D. D., Evangelical Lutheran.*

"'I can only say, that in my old age, and near my last account, I stand ready to do all in my power to coöperate with your Board in its efforts to promote this precious cause.'—*Rev. Samuel Miller, D. D., Presbyterian.*

"'An enterprise which I consider second to none of the benevolent objects of the day in which we live.'—*Rev. John Codman, D. D., Congregationalist.*

"'I know of nothing that tends to elevate and bless man for time and for eternity, that this Society does not seek to do for the degraded and the wretched.'—*Rev. Thomas H. Stockton, Protestant Methodist.*

"'It is a combination of all benevolent agencies.'—*Hon. Theodore Frelinghuysen, Reformed Dutch Church.*

"'Over all lands, this Society has poured, by the press, millions of streams of light and love. I know of no insti-

tution doing so much to fill the vials of incense in the hands of the angel standing by the altar.'—*Rev. Baron Stow, D. D., Baptist.*

"'This institution commends itself to all of us, fellow-citizens, in our civil no less than in our religious relations, in the community in which we live.'—*Rev. James Milnor, D. D., Protestant Episcopalian.*

"'It is a noble enterprise, deserving the hearty encouragement and support of all who seek to promote the cause of Christ's religion among the destitute of our country.'—*Hon. Simon Greenleaf, Protestant Episcopalian.*

"'I doubt whether in the world, at this time, there exists an organization, the Christian ministry excepted, which is more effective in diffusing a knowledge of the truths of the gospel among all classes of people.'—*Rev. A. Alexander, D. D., Presbyterian.*

"'I love the Tract enterprise, because it is a cause in which evangelical Christians can unite. I hail as an omen of good, the establishment of any institutions which will bring together Christians of different denominations. Bring them into contact; let them become acquainted with each other; let them mingle their prayers and sympathies, and their prejudices will give way, and they will find that they have the same religion.'—*Rev. Dr. Peck, of the Methodist Episcopal Church.*

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